

The Gramophone Shop, Inc.

Record Supplement

for

November, 1937

EIGHTEEN EAST FORTY-EIGHTH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

Overture

MANY of our patrons have pointed out to us that the value of our monthly announcements and reviews of new record releases and importations has been seriously weakened by the awkwardness in handling and saving several letter-size mimeographed pages, plus a separate leaflet of popular records. They have had difficulty in keeping the letter intact and in tracing specific reviews in back issues. And space limitations prevented our giving any comment on some records (the "check list") or dealing at sufficient length with works of unusual importance.

The present publication is an attempt to embody some of the valuable suggestions that have been given us. We issue it in the hope that it marks a measurable improvement — in usefulness as well as appearance — over the old format. The punch holes in the margin are designed to permit regular filing of the Record Supplements in a standard binder (if enough people are interested, we shall be glad to prepare a suitably imprinted binder and supply it at a nominal cost). All new records — of "serious" music — are reviewed in alphabetical order by composers with larger headings for the more important names for easier and quick reference. With the exception of a selection of the best dance and popular records (listed without comment on the last page), we review every work — some in a brief line or two, those that are more significant in considerable detail.

We have endeavored to avoid indiscriminate praise and adoption of an inflexible and dogmatic critical standard, believing the function of these reviews to be primarily expository, answering the prospective buyer's questions: Is this a record I shall like and should have? What sort of music is it? How good is the performance and recording? *De gustibus non est disputandum*, but each type of music has its own standards and we make no apology for devoting greater attention to a fine recording of a piece of light music than to a weak or inadequate recording of a masterpiece. At the same time we believe that one of the greatest delights of record collecting is that of discovery: a new work, composer, or artist whose significance is obscured by unfamiliarity, and we shall hymn truly worth while discoveries in no uncertain terms (as, for instance, we do in the case of the Boyce and Couperin works reviewed in this issue).

However, this is all a purely tentative venture and one that we cannot continue without the approval and support of our patrons. We invite expressions of their reaction and we shall be grateful indeed for any suggestions they may have for heightening the value of this publication as a convenient running supplement to *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* and as a trustworthy guide to the interest and merits of current record releases.

The Gramophone Shop, Inc.

The World's Best Recorded Music
The Finest in Musical Reproduction

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Record Supplement for November, 1937

Review of the New Records • By mail to any address 25c a year

Albeniz: *Cordoba*, Op. 252 (*Nocturne, Cantos de Espana No. 4*). Jose Iturbi (piano). 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-4573, price \$1.00.

Iturbi's lilting reading of this tuneful piece satisfactorily supersedes the 1931 cut version by Arthur Rubinstein (V-7248X; G-DB1266).

Albeniz: *Torre Bermeja (Serenata—La Tour vermeille) & Popular Spanish Dance Fandanguillo*. Manuela del Rio (castanets), J. Roca (guitar), L. Compolieta (piano). 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-K7716, price \$1.50.

Another haunting Albeniz work and a popular dance embellished with castanet rhythms, but chiefly notable for the deft piano playing.

Arensky: *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky*. See Collection below (NBC String Symphony Album.)

BACH

Trio-Sonatas (2 Claviers & Pedal) No. 5 in C major & No. 6 in G major. Carl Weinrich (Westminster Choir School, Princeton, Organ). 6 sides, 3-12" discs in Set No. MC-6, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

The simple flowing texture of these graceful little works is ideally suited for recording and these first gramophonic versions are marked by a technical excellence far and away above that of any previous American organ discs and even very close to that of the memorable French Pathé album. Carl Weinrich's registrations are shrewdly chosen to approximate the open forthright qualities of the German organs of Bach's time and his performances are distinguished by first-rate musicianship unmarred by any trace of affection or sloppiness.

K. P. E. Bach Symphony No. 5 in C major. See Collections below (NBC String Symphony Album)

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67. Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood. 8 sides, 4-12" discs, Nos. D-25707/10, price \$3.00 the set (plain 4-pocket album 50c additional).

A notable addition to the series of inexpensive gramophonic editions of the classic (comparable to the Modern Library editions in the book world), this set is frankly aimed at the mass market. And it has a lot of power behind it: the Beethoven "Fifth", a performance done with bold broad strokes, and ultra-vigorous recording featuring a strong bass register. It is not for connoisseurs of musical subtleties, but it is just the thing to grasp and hold attention of the man in the street and to give him a strong boost up the ladder of musical appreciation.

Quartet—String No. 16 in F major, Op. 133. Lener String Quartet. 6 sides, 3-12" discs in Set CM-307, price complete with album \$5.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Except for its profoundly moving *Lento assai* the last of Beethoven's quartets is hardly comparable with Opp. 130/1/2. The present set is a re-recording of the Leners' version (CM-55 of 1927) and is somewhat superior in recording to the Busch Quartet's set (VM-287) of a year or two ago, but definitely inferior in performance (that is, to all except devotees of the Leners' stylized playing).

Romance No. 2 in F major, Op. 50. Albert Spalding (violin) and Andre Benoit (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-14579, price \$2.00.

A companion disc to Spalding's record of the first Romance (V-1788), this is likewise a good enough version but hardly preferable to those with the original orchestral accompaniment.

Bizet: *Les Pecheurs de Perles—Au fond du temple sainte*, Act I. Jose Luccioni (tenor) & Pierre Deldi (baritone). **Delibes:** *Lakme—Sous le dome epais*, Act I. Germaine Feraldy & Andree Bernadet (sopranos). Both in French with orchestra conducted by E. Cohen. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-9135M, price \$1.50.

This fine version of the Nadir-Zurga duo is a French *Candide* Grand Prix winner; the *Lakme* duo is a re-issue of a deft performance once available on C-50507D.

Bloch: *Studies in Sepia*. Harrison Potter, (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. FRM-12, price \$1.75.

The Friends of Recorded Music are to be credited with this first recorded representation of a Bloch piano work. These five sketches (*Prelude*, *Mist Wreaths over the Town*, *Fireflies*, *Hesitation*, *Epilogue*) have been termed Verlaine poems in tone, but they are more sharply etched than most impressionistic piano pieces and Harrison Potter effectively brings out their pointedness without however adding much to their slight musical significance.

Bortianovsky: *Hymn of the Cherubims No. 7 & Tches-nokov:* *Prayer During Lent*. Russian Cathedral at Paris Choir (unacc., in Russian) conducted by N. Afonsky. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-L1005, price \$2.00.

One of the finest available records of Russian liturgical music, coupling the seraphic *Cherubic Hymn* of Bortianovsky with Paul Tchesnokov's imploring *Prayer* (titled *Que ma priere monte* in French), the latter with solo passages by Mme. G. Pavlenko and both with superbly recorded organ tones of Russian contra-basses.

Boyce: 8 "Symphonies" (transcribed by Constant Lambert). New York Simfonietta conducted by Max Goberman. 17 sides, 9-10" discs in Set TI-1K, price complete with album \$13.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

More and more the minor independent recording groups are setting an example for the major manufacturers in selecting material for recording that is well off the beaten track and yet of exceptional musical significance. Here the Timely Recording Company scores a clean scoop with a complete set of the Boyce Symphonies, written around 1750 but strangely neglected until transcribed and published by Constant Lambert in 1928. Dr. William Boyce (1710-1779) was a British organist and composer best-known for his church works and his editorship of a famous collection of sixteenth and seventeenth cathedral music. As Lambert writes "the neglect into which his instrumental works have fallen is unaccountable, for they rank among the finest compositions of their time, not only in England but in Europe." The Symphonies (which are really miniature concerti grossi, for all the contradiction in terms), seldom take more than two ten-inch record sides apiece, but within these brief limits is truly glorious music: rhythms of unbounded vivacity and melodies whose eloquence is worthy of Handel himself. The New York Simfonietta loses nothing of the unflagging gusto of these astonishing little works and the recording is clean-cut. The talk on Boyce by William Kozlenko (last record-side) is a bit superfluous: Boyce speaks for himself and irresistibly well. An uncommon set of unusual music and one to be recommended whole-heartedly.

BRAHMS

Variations on a Theme by Paganini, Op. 53. Egon Petri (piano). 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69027/8D, price \$5.00 the pair.

This work, based on Paganini's 24th Caprice, is one for confirmed Brahmsians and virtuoso pianists and students. But while it is of less musical interest than the Handel Variations, it provides a magnificent work-out for Petri's prodigious technique and an opportunity for the Columbia piano recorders to testify impressively to the progress made in the six years since the release of the Bachaus version (V-7419/20).

Wienenglied, Op. 49, No. 4 & Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer, Op. 105, No. 2. Elizabeth Schumann (soprano, in German) with orchestra. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA1562, price \$2.00.

Despite the fact that *Immer leiser* was written for a low voice and both songs lose rather than gain by an orchestral transcription of the accompaniment, Mme. Schumann's lovely voice and sensitive interpretations make this a record hard to resist.

Feldeinsamkeit, Op. 86, No. 2 & Wie bist du, meine Koenigin, Op. 52, No. 9. Gerhard Huesch (baritone, in German) with piano accompaniments by Hanns Udo Muller. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-EG3308, price \$1.50.

A fine Brahms *Lieder* disc distinguished by the superb blend of virility and restraint in Huesch's ably recorded performances.

Hungarian Dances No. 1 in G minor & No. 17 in F sharp minor (arr. Joachim). Yehudi Menuhin (violin) & Marcel Gazelle (piano). 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA1491, price \$2.00.

Dashing, vibrant fiddle playing and vigorous recording.

Certani: Leggende delle Dolomiti. Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adriano Ariani. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69030D, price \$1.50.

Antonio Certani is an Italian cellist and composer, born in 1879, whose music makes its American debut with this poetically played *Legend* — based on a fantastic poem by Carlo Zangarini. His melodic invention is facile rather than original, but at least his melodies really sing and his Straussian orchestration is handsomely effective in this recording.

COUPERIN

Lecon de Tenebres, No. 5 for Wednesday (Arr. Arthur Hoeree). Paul Derenne & Hughes Cuenod (tenors), Archimbaud (treble), N. Wetchor (soprano), Adriano (trumpet solo), Madeleine de Lacour (harpsichord), Bracquemond (Gonzalez organ), Y. Gouverneur Chorus, Orchestre Feminin de Paris, conducted by Jane Evrard. 4 sides, 2-12" imported discs, Nos. G-DB5010/1, price \$5.00 the pair.

Just when it begins to seem that the entire musical repertory is well covered by the gramophone and that the future of recording lies largely in remaking existing works, along comes an amazing piece of music like this by Couperin to

remind us that we know only a fraction of the works of outstanding genius. To us this set is one of the most arresting discoveries (L'Anthologie Sonore's Machault Mass is one of the few that may be ranked with it) the gramophone has ever given us. Inexpressibly poignant, as rhapsodically lyrical as the great melodies of Gregorian Chant, richly and enchantingly colored as the finest achievements of the impressionist composers, this work is unique in its originality, comparable with other masterpieces only in its irresistibly moving evocative magic.

Francois Couperin, whom we thought we knew by his charming little harpsichord pieces and orchestral suites, is revealed to us anew—truly worthy of his title "le Grand," in this singular Lesson, or Service, of the Shadows, so-called because the service for which it was intended was given in the late afternoon and ended with the darkness coming on. The Latin text is from the Old Testament, Jeremiah's Lamentations on the destruction of Jerusalem, written in acrostic form, the initial letters of which have been carried over into the Catholic liturgy. Hence the curious names of the vocalises here: *Jod, Caph, Lamed, Mem, Nun*. Written for two voice parts and figured bass, the work has been arranged by Hoeree according to the indications of the composer and the ornamentation symbols in his score, and for once musicianship and taste combine to make the term "arrangement" one of honor rather than obloquy. The same lofty standards mark the superbly integrated and recorded performance, and altogether apart from the impact of the music itself, the gorgeous tonal qualities of the unusual performing ensemble are an enchantment to the ear. In its exquisitely balanced entirety this set becomes an unforgettable and wholly unique musical experience.



de Curtis: *Non ti scordar di me & Schubert-Melichar: Mille cherubini in coro (Lullaby)*, both from the film "Forget Me Not" Beniamino Gigli (tenor, in Italian) with Orchestra conducted by Alois Melichar. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-1842, price \$1.50.

Two bland film tunes heavily over-weighted with Gigli's lushest tone and most lachrymose emotionalization.

Delibes: *Lakme—Sous le dome epais*. See reverse side of Bizet disc above.

DELIUS

The Delius Society, Volume I: *Paris* (6 sides), *Eventyr* (4 sides), *Koanga—Finale Scene* (2 sides), *Hassan—Interlude & Serenade* (1 side), *Songs—To the Queen of My Heart & Love's Philosophy* (1 side). London Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham; Heddle Nash (tenor) with piano accompaniments by Gerald Moore. 14 sides, 7-12" discs in Set CM-305, subscription price complete with album & booklet \$14.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

When we first announced the British pressings of this set, it made a distinctly specialized appeal, but today, (after the domestic release of the Delius Society's Volume 2 as CM-290) the Delians are far stronger in both numbers and enthusiasm. Now the time seems ripe for widespread distribution of these minor, but characteristic, works whose familiar Delian fragrance and surprising dramatic vigor are so matchlessly captured in Beechman's readings. Incidentally, the recording itself—hailed as a miracle several years ago

—still startles one with its full-blooded sonorities and realism, comparable to even the best studio work of recent months. The pretty little *Hassan* tune and the two Shelley lyric settings make pleasant listening, but it is the early *Koanga* scene and the nocturne *Paris* ("The Song of a Great City"), together with the ballad of 1917, *Eventyr* ("Once Upon a Time"), that give a new insight into Delius' curious genius and reveal a dramatic breadth and energy new to those who know him only by his miniatures.

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Donati: Chi la Galtarda & Morley: Sing We and Chant It. Regensburger Domchor (unacc. chorus, in German) conducted by Dr. The. Schrems. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-EG3927, price \$1.50.

Two charming madrigals in the gayest Italian and Elizabethan traditions that stand up better under their German titles (*Wenn wir hinauszieh'n* and *Auf, lasst uns singen*) than they do in these methodical and inelastic performances.

Faure: Elegie, Op. 24. Jean Benedetti ('cello) and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-14577, price \$2.00.

The poetic *Elegie*, a favorite of every 'cellist, is usually heard and recorded with piano accompaniment, but this form and the oldish existing discs give little idea of the mellow warmth the piece assumes in this modern recording by the Boston Symphony with its brilliant first 'cellist as soloist.

Faure: Clair de Lune, Op. 46, No. 2 & En Priere. Charles Panzera (baritone, in French) with piano accompaniments by Magdeleine Panzera-Baillot. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA4887, price \$2.00.

George Thill was excellent in the famous Verlaine setting (C-4164M), but Panzera is even better: his delicacy, restraint, and veiled tone mark this as the finest of many *Clair de Lune* recordings. *En Priere*, text by Stephan Bordese, is an unfamiliar but no less authentic lyric jewel set with the simplicity and exquisite craftsmanship so distinctively Faure's signature. One will seek far to find a disc more engagingly representative of French song writing and singing at their best.

Franz: Im Herbst, Op. 17, No. 6 & Mutter, o sing mich zur Ruh', Op. 10, No. 5. Margarete Teschemacher (soprano, in German) with piano accompaniments by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-EG5896, price \$1.50.

Except for the fine album-set by Ernst Wolff (CM-253), the recorded Franz repertory is barren indeed and it is a pleasure to welcome these sensitive performances of the familiar Autumn song (far superior to the Tauber version) and the less familiar but even finer *Mutter, o sing mich*, hitherto unrecorded.

Granados: 7 Tonadillas — Las Currutacas Modestas, Callejero, La Maja Dolorosa, Amor y Odio, El Tra-la-y el Punteado, El Majo Discreto, El Majo Timido. Conchita Supervia (soprano, in Spanish) with piano accompaniments by Frank Marshall. 4 sides, 2-10" imported discs, Nos. P-R020324/5, price \$3.00 the pair.

These sprightly and ironic Iberian airs that spring from one's loudspeaker so spontaneously and fetchingly in Mme. Supervia's lyrical performances are as pointed and barbed

as the Goya etching that serve as subjects for Periquet's texts, and here too there is a background of tragedy to the gay irony — the early death that cut short the careers of both composer and singer. Granados has never been better represented on discs than by these seven *Tondadillas* or "little songs" (based on Goya and the popular Spanish tunes of his day) and surely Mme. Supervia—despite the slight persistent tremolo—was never in better voice or interpretative form. A set to be treasured for its musical merits and as a perfect gramophonic Supervia memento.

Griffes: Sonata—Piano. Harrison Potter (piano). 4 sides, 2-12" discs, No. FRM-10/1, price \$3.50 the pair.

The Friends of Recorded Music continue their efforts to make the works of Charles Griffes better known by issuing the first recording of his piano sonata, played by its most notable concert exponent, Harrison Potter. For the Griffes devotees this work foreshadows the trend the composer would have followed had he lived longer . . . it "has the intellectual consistency of a Schoenberg, a pursuit of tonal logic without the sacrifice of poetic conception" (J. T. Howard: "Our American Music"). Indeed it is much more impressive than any of Griffes' other works we know (or even the piano sonatas of MacDowell), and its breadth and vigor are admirably caught in Potter's well organized and clean-cut playing, given extremely sonorous and realistic recording.

Jannequin: Le Chant des Oyseaux. The Madrigal Singers (unacc. chorus, in French) conducted by Lehman Engel. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-9154M, price \$1.50.

Clement Jannequin the man was a very shadowy figure of the first half of the sixteenth century, but there is nothing obscure or antique about his music, for "it was in his hands" (to quote Dr. Sachs' notes for L'Anthologie Sonore Vol. 1) "the *chanson* assumed its most characteristic and distinctive French qualities: concise motifs, sparkling rhythms, sprightliness, and the love of life, wit, and pungency . . . qualities that so strongly distinguish his . . . *Chant des Oyseaux* from the frigid and unimaginative descriptive writing so common in the realistic music of every age." Mr. Engel's reading is hardly as authentic as that by M. Expert for L'Anthologie Sonore, but the Madrigal Singers' performance is more spirited and better recorded than any of their previous gramophonic work.

Kilpinen: Six Fjeld-Lieder from Opp. 52/5/4—Das Moor, Den Fjelden zu, Alte Kirche, Am Kirchenstrande, An das Lied, Fjeldlied. Gerhard Huesch (baritone, in German) with Orchestra conducted by Hanns Udo Muller. 4 sides, 2-10" imported discs, Nos. G-DA1495/6, price \$4.00 the pair.

This little appendix to the Kilpinen Society Album again features the Finnish song writer's favorite interpreter, Huesch, for whom the composer especially orchestrated the original piano accompaniments of these Tormanen settings (*Tunturilauluja* in the original Finnish). While not likely to be popular, these remarkable little songs bear out Kilpinen's claim to the mantle of Wolf and Moussorgsky and should not be missed by Lieder specialists.

(A limited number of subscriptions to the Society Album of nineteen Kilpinen songs — including the *Lieder um den Tod*, Op. 62 — are still available, price \$12.50.)

LISZT

Totentanz (Paraphrase on "Dies Irae"). Jesus Maria Sanroma (piano) and the Boston "Pops" Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. 4 sides, 2-12" discs in VM-592, price complete with album \$3.50.

Liszt was inspired by Orcagna's fresco of *The Last Judgment* to write this remarkable *Dance of Death*, first sketched in 1849, revised in 1855, but not performed until 1881. It was played then and countless times later by one of Liszt's greatest pupils, the Russian virtuoso Alexander Siloti, and for music lovers all over the world this work is closely associated with Siloti's name and playing. The old plainsong melody of *Dies Irae* has been used by many composers, but by none (except possibly Berlioz) more brilliantly than Liszt. For all its melodrama it is a powerful and striking work and the long-needed gramophonic version is ably supplied by this virile, full-blooded recorded performance by Sanroma and the Boston "Pops" Orchestra. For sheer excitement it makes even Stokowski's version of the Saint-Saëns *Danse macabre* sound like a Chaminade *Scarf Dance*!

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (orch. Muller). Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-14422, price \$2.00.

Dr. Stokowski's film public will go into ecstasies over this and even the gramophonic connoisseur is likely to listen with his jaw agape, for the showy playing is matched by recording of even more blazing virtuoso brilliance. Electric recording has come a long way since this war-horse appeared as V-6652 in 1927.

Liebestraum No. 5 & Ketelbey: In a Monastery Garden ("Musical Dramatizations" by Lew White). Lew White (organ) with violin, harp, chorus. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-36209, price \$1.25

In the best movie cathedral tradition and the worst musical taste.

Les Preludes—Symphonic Poem No. 5. Philharmonic Orchestra, Paris, conducted by Selmar Meyrowitz. 4 sides, 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69033/4D, price \$3.00 the pair.

This old war-horse has been recorded many times, but it is remarkable how much more fire and bombast engineers are able to capture on discs today than they could only a few years ago. Here they lose nothing of Meyrowitz's scintillating performance and he in turn loses nothing, despite his firm hand, of Liszt's grandiloquence and bombast.

Consolation No. 5 in D flat major & Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10 ("Preludio"). Arthur Rubinstein (piano). 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-DB3216, price \$2.50.

There is not much musical substance in this Nocturne-like *Consolation* and fiery *Rhapsody* (with its silly glissandos), but Rubinstein and the engineers make the most of it, incidentally displaying as fine a legato and singing tone as are to be heard on piano records.

Faust Waltz. Egon Petri (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69031D, price \$1.50.

Petri is just the sure-handed craftsman to spin Liszt's ornate filigrees, but neither he nor Liszt can give any distinction to the strictly synthetic *Faust* jewel fortunately half-lost in the elaborate setting.

Malipiero: Quartet—Strings "Rispetti e Strambotti" (7 sides) & Beryl Rubinstein: Passepied (1 side). Kreiner String Quartet. 4-12" discs in Set VM-397, price complete with album \$5.00 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

This is one of two string quartets (the other, *Stornelli e Ballate*, was once recorded by the Poltronieri Quartet on NGS-103/4, now out of print) that rank among Malipiero's best work and by which he is best known—at least in this country. Both works take their names from Italian folk and popular song forms and the short movements with their nervous rhythms, gay tunes, and incisive style admirably reflect the influence of the music of the Italian soil. The Kreiners, making their Victor debut, capture Malipiero's engaging gusto in this work, but one wishes they had chosen a more distinguished odd-side selection.

Miaskovsky: Sinfonietta, Op. 52, No. 2. See Collection below (NBC String Symphony Album).

MONTEVERDI

"Collection Nadia Boulanger" Album No. 1: Monteverdi. Mmes. J. de Polignac, I. Kedroff, L. Rauh, N. Kedroff; MM. P. Derenne, H. Cuenod, D. Conrad; Vocal & Instrumental Ensemble; piano accompaniments and direction by Nadia Boulanger. 10 sides, 5-12" imported discs, Nos. G-DB5058/42, price complete with album \$12.50.

Amor, Ardo, Il ballo delle ingrate, Chiome d'oro, Ecco mormorar l'onde, Hor ch'e ciel e la terra, Lasciatemi morire, Ohime dove il mio ben, Zefiro torna.

The long-awaited major gramophonic representation of Monteverdi is marked above all by the beauty of its tone qualities (with much of the same magic as those of the Couperin *Lecon de Tenebres* performance) and by the varied facets it reveals of the composer's diverse genius. Best perhaps are the two great madrigals, *Ecco mormorar* and *Lasciatemi morire* (another setting of the famous *Lamento d'Arianna*), but the two-sided excerpt from *Il ballo delle ingrate* (a vocal ballet dating from 1608) is of unusual interest. Matchlessly sung and recorded, this set just falls short of supreme significance (there can be no excuse for the use of a piano instead of a harpsichord), but for all that it is sure to be treasured by every lover of old music.

MOUSSORGSKY

Boris Godounov—Symphonic Synthesis (Arr. Stokowski). Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. 6 sides, 3-12" discs in Set VM-391, price complete with album \$6.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Dr. Stokowski's Wagnerian syntheses were not an unqualified success, but the present orchestral suite extracted from the original (not the Rimsky-Korsakov) score of *Boris* met with critical cheers in concert and now on records it makes a powerful musical impact. Although Stokowski's aim was to "help the orchestra more completely say what Moussorgsky was aiming to express," he has wisely let Moussorgsky do his own expressing, helping him only to the extent of transferring choral passages to the strings and sharpening the orchestration in a few places. Beginning with the distant chanting of the pilgrims and the Corona-

tion from the Prologue, the synthesis includes the monks' chanting in the monastery and—for the fantastic scherzo—Varlaam's tale of the destruction of Kazan (Act I), the Revolutionary Scene and Death of Boris (Act IV). The superb playing of the Philadelphians is subordinated to the incomparably plangent, searing music. Even the recording itself, which in another work would be acclaimed as the last step in technical miracles, serves here only to give more golden voice to the tongue of men and angels with which Moussorgsky speaks for the soul of a whole nation.

MOZART

Symphony No. 28 in C major, K.200. Berliner Instrumental-Collegium conducted by Fritz Stein. 4 sides, 2-12" imported discs, Nos. G-EH1047/8, price \$4.00 the pair.

A welcome replacement of the long-withdrawn NGS version of an early symphony (written in 1773, when the composer was seventeen), this set ably fills a gap in the recorded repertory and will be a source of joy to every Mozartian. Dr. Stein wields a deft baton over his chamber-sized and very alert students' orchestra, and there is no sentimentalization or blurring of Mozart's incomparable vivacity in either performance or recording.

Quartets—Flute & Strings in D major, K.285, & A major, K.298. The Oxford Ensemble. 8 sides, 4-10" discs in Set MC-7, price complete with album \$4.50.

Many a gramophile still treasures his NGS discs of the D major flute quartet (deservedly the most popular of all works in this form), but the recorded balance of the Le Roy-Mangeot group was poor. It is good to have an up-to-date version with the other Mozart work for flute, violin, viola, and 'cello thrown in for good measure. The latter work is essentially a suite—one of the most capricious Mozart ever penned—and the theme of the first movement variations is probably more familiar in other composers' borrowings than in the original version. The Oxford group with Milton Wittgenstein in the flute role, is not the most polished of recording ensembles, but it plays with real sensibility and animation, while the music itself is completely captivating.

Duo—Violin & Viola, B flat major, K.424—Andante cantabile. See odd-side of Reger Serenade below.

Pochon: Fantasie Hebraïque. Stradivarius String Quartet. 4 sides, 2-10" discs, Nos. C-17103/4D, price \$2.00 the pair.

An unpretentious work for strings based on old Russian Jewish melodies some of which are exceedingly expressive and eloquently set here. The dance tunes, while treated with ingenuity, fit less congruously into the little Fantasie.

Poulenc: Le Bestiaire. Claire Croiza (soprano, in French) with piano accompaniments by Francis Poulenc. **Satie: Trois Melodies.** Jane Bathori (soprano, in French) with piano accompaniments by Darius Milhaud. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-9132M, price \$1.50.

A happily chosen re-pressing and re-coupling of two delightful French song cycles in miniature: Poulenc's witty tonal zoo and Satie's singular *Daphne* (text by M. God!), *La Statue de Bronze*, and *Le Chapelet*. Recorded some time ago, the excellent performances still come through with surprising effectiveness.

Prokofieff: 18 Piano Works Serge Prokofieff (piano). 8 sides, 4-12" imported discs, Nos. GDB5030/5, price \$10.00 the set (plain 4-pocket album 50c additional).

Andante, Op. 29; Contes de la vieille Grand'mere, Op. 51—Nos. 2 & 5; Etude, Op. 52; Gavottes No. 2, Op. 25 & No. 5, Op. 52; Paysage, Op. 59; Sonatine Pastorale, Op. 9; Suggestion Diabolique, Op. 4, No. 4; Visions Fugitives, Op. 22—Nos. 5, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18.

Only two of these pieces have been recorded before: the *Suggestion Diabolique* and the second *Gavotte* (which is the same as that in the "Classical" Symphony). Prokofieff, as many an American concert audience knows, is a first-rate pianist and the crisp, straightforward style of both his playing and writing is admirably suited to the gramophone. There is nothing of startling modernity here, indeed many of the pieces are almost childlike in their simplicity and tunefulness. A trifle monotonous if played straight through, the collection includes many piquant, spirited, and lyrical miniatures that give lively pleasure in themselves and as a set serve as a major, authentic recorded representation of the piano works of an outstanding contemporary composer.

Puccini: *Tosca—Recondita armonia, Act I* & *Verdi: Rigoletto—La donna e mobile, Act III.* Jussi Bjorling (tenor, in Italian) with orchestra conducted by Nils Grevillius. 2 sides, 10" disc, No. V-4372, price \$1.00.

A domestic re-pressing of G-DA1548 reviewed in our September letter and very convincing evidence that the sensational Swedish tenor has not been over-praised.

Reger: *Serenade in D major, Op. 77a.* (5 sides). Paul Klinger (violin), Fridolin Klingler (viola), Gustav Schreck (flute). **Mozart:** *Duo in B flat major, K.424—Andante cantabile* (1 side). Paul & Fridolin Klingler. 5-12" imported discs, Nos. G-EH1029/31, price \$6.00 the pair (plain 3-pocket album 50c additional).

While we still wait for some major Reger works on discs, this first recording of this graceful quasi-archaic *Serenade* throws new light on the minor facets of his prodigious talent. For all its contrapuntal ingenuity, the music here is seemingly artlessly tuneful. It is attractive enough in this deft, well-recorded performance, but like so many Reger works it is not quite convincing: the touch is Mozartian, but the uncabined spirit is simply not there. One has only to play the dreamy little *Andante* on the odd-side, part of a minor work tossed off for another's (Michael Haydn's) signature to realize the incalculable catalytic element that is lacking.

Russell: *St. Lawrence Sketches—Song of the Basket Weaver & Dickinson: Berceuse.* Charles M. Courboin (Wanamaker Organ, Philadelphia). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. V-14578, price \$2.00.

We are beginning to hope that Courboin's loudly fanfare Bach series never does appear: his gift is too obviously for estimable organistic nonentities of this genre.

Sarasate: *Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20, No. 1.* Jascha Heifetz (violin) & London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-DB3212, price \$2.50.

Scores of fiddlers have recorded this perennial virtuoso piece, but they need labor no more. Heifetz and Barbirolli have said the last word and said it matchlessly.

Satie: 5 Melodies. See reverse side of Poulenc *Bestiaire* disc above.

SCHUBERT

12 Laendler, Op. 171. Alfred Cortot (piano). 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-DB3268, price \$2.50.

A curious choice for Cortot to record, these little waltzes are played so charmingly that one entirely loses sight of their essential insignificance.

Das Lied im Gruenen, Op. 115, No. 1 & **Wolf: Frohe Botschaft.** Karl Erb (tenor, in German) with piano accompaniments by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA4420, price \$2.00.

Although now a man of sixty, Karl Erb is still one of the greatest artists among contemporary singers and his current series of *Lieder* recordings is winning deserved acclaim abroad. The present coupling of two gay songs (that by Wolf is a first recording) is naturally not remarkable for its tonal beauty (and Erb's small voice seems to be considerably amplified here), but it is an astonishing example of voice handling and of spirited and artistic interpretation that might be studied to good advantage by many of even the headline *Lieder* singers of today.

Schumann: Widmung, Op. 25, No. 1 & **Die Lotosblume, Op. 25, No. 7.** Herbert Jansen (baritone, in German) with piano accompaniments by Gerald Moore. 2 sides, 10" imported disc, No. G-DA1569, price \$2.00.

This *Lieder* disc must be praised as much as Erb's above, but for quite different reasons. Jansen hasn't such craftsmanship as Erb's, as yet, but he boasts a gloriously fresh voice and a sensitive interpretative insight. The impetuous passion he brings to *Widmung* well warrants the British eulogies of this recorded performance as the apotheosis of *Lieder* singing.

Sibelius: Canzonetta, Op. 62a. See collection below NBC String Symphony Album).

Smetana: The Bartered Bride—Opening Chorus & Polka, Act I. Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra (in German) conducted by Erich Orthmann. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-EH1035, price \$2.00.

Surely there is no more delightful music in the entire operatic repertory than in Smetana's gloriously youthful score . . . Here are two grand bits: the bursting buds chorus that opens the work and the folkish Polka with Chorus that closes the first act. The recording is impressive here, but the performances are heavy-handed in comparison with those in the Prague National Opera Company's complete set of the opera (VM-193).

O. Straus: Les Trois Valses—C'est la saison d'amour & Té souvient-il (after J. Strauss, Sr.) Je ne suis pas ce que l'on pense & C'est le destin peut-être. Yvonne Printemps (soprano) with orchestra conducted by Marcel Cariven. 4 sides, 2-10" imported discs, Nos. G-DA-4903/4, price \$4.00 the pair.

The *Three Waltzes* with music by two Strausses and a Strauss is already in rehearsal for a New York production, but we cannot imagine these lilting airs in any other voice than that of Yvonne Printemps. The music itself is cut to stock patterns, but electrified by the singer's bewitching personality—never more captivating than here, and especially in

Je ne suis pas ce que l'on pense—it becomes a Printemps triumph. Add a bit of dialogue with Pierre Fresnay (much in the Gertrude Lawrence-Noel Coward tradition) and excellent recording, these discs are little masterpieces of recorded operetta.

J. Strauss: *G'schichten aus dem Wiener Wald*, Op. 523. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69029D, price \$1.50.

Columbia dug deep into its old British lists for this, but only the recording shows any sign of age: Walter's enchanting performance has all the vivacious lilt of the ageless music itself, plus a delicacy and polish rarely found in Waltz discs.

J. Strauss: "Immortal Strauss" (A Medley of Strauss Waltzes). Viennese Waltz Orchestra. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-C2882, price \$2.00.

The conductor's name is omitted from the label, and unjustly, for he has a fine sense of the Viennese style and his deft performances make this one of the best waltz medley discs. Eight familiar works by the Waltz King are included, plus one—*Sphaerenklaenge*—by Josef Strauss.

WAGNER

Die Goetterdaemmerung—Hagens Wacht, Act I (1 side) & Hagens Ruf, (Act II (3 sides). Ludwig Weber (bass), Herbert Janssen (baritone), Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Chorus & London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. 2-12" discs, Nos. C-69047/8D, price \$3.00 the pair.

The Wagnerian lists have been rather lean of late, but just to show that the recording companies haven't abandoned their first love this set comes as the first of a series of excerpts made at actual Covent Garden, London, performances. Ludwig Weber, a superbly sinister Hagen, does the complete "summoning the vassals" scene with a brief bit for Janssen as Gunther toward the end the spirited cooperation of the Royal Opera House male chorus. The odd-side is appropriately the Act. I monologue beginning with "*Hier sitz' ich zur Wacht.*" There have been other recordings of the passages but none done with such verve and authentic stage atmosphere. The orchestra is not always prominent enough, and there is one awkward side break, but on the whole the problems of actual performance recording have been ably met, and the dramatic gusto of a non-studio version will alone—at least for many opera lovers—for the deficiencies in balance and polish.

Siegfried—Nothung! Nothung! Neidliches Schwert, Act I. Max Lorenz (tenor, in German) with orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-DB4470, price \$2.50.

Max Lorenz has done the Forging Scene (including the Hammer Song "Schmiede, mein Hammer") before in the Telefunken Bayreuth series (T-SKB2054), but this was the least satisfactory record of the series and the present disc is superior in vigor of both recording and performance.

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Wieniawski. Polonaise brillante No. 1 in D major Op. 4 & Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 22—Romance. Nathan Milstein (violin) & Leopold Mittman (piano). 2 sides, 12" disc, No. C-69032D, price \$1.50.

A nicely contrasted coupling of Wieniawski fiddle fireworks and lyricism. The Polonaise is a first recording.

Wolf: Frohe Botschaft. See reverse side of Schubert Lied in Grunen above.

COLLECTION

Miaskovsky: Sinfonietta, Op. 52, No. 2 (7 sides); K. P. E. Bach: Symphony No. 5 in C major (3 sides); Aronsky: Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky, Op. 53a (3 sides); Sibelius: Canzonetta, Op. 62a (1 side). NBC String Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frank Black. 7-12" discs in Set VM-390, price complete with album \$10.50 (Parcel Post prepaid to any part of the U.S.A.).

Labelled rather enigmatically "Program No. 1" on the backbone, this album is apparently the first of a series of recorded versions of the string orchestral programs with which Mr. Black has been so successful on the air. The arrangement might better have called for opening with the charming K.P.E. Bach Symphony and closing with the major item, the Sinfonietta which at last brings a work of Miaskovsky to discs. The Canzonetta is once of Sibilius' attractive but decidedly minor works. The Arensky Variations on one of Tchaikovsky's Children's Songs were originally the second movement of the String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, but they are much better known in the present string orchestral version. We believe that most record buyers object to album groupings of miscellaneous works, particularly when the side arrangement—as here—makes it difficult to obtain individual discs of the separate pieces. With this reservation, the present set—made up entirely of hitherto unrecorded music—is an admirable one, and it is good indeed to have Mr. Black's skillful performances available on records as well as on the air.

MISCELLANEOUS

Nights at the Ballet, No. 1. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. 2 sides, 12" imported disc, No. G-C2914, price \$2.00.

A happy tidbit for balletomanes: brightly recorded versions of the *Preamble* from Schumann's *Carnival*, C. sharp minor Valse from the Chopin ballet *Les Sylphides*, *Dance of the Little Swans* from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, Tarantella from the Rossini-Respighi *Boutique Fantasque*, *Danse de la Fee Dragee* from the *Nutcracker Suite*, and a generous slice of the Ravel *Bolero*.

DICTION

Guitry: *Le Mot de Cambronne* (Comedie en un acte). Sacha Guitry, Marguerite Moreno, Pauline Carton, Jacqueline Delubac. 4-12" imported discs, Nos. G-DB-5012/5, price complete with album \$10.00.

Another of the incomparable Guitry sets, this time a comedy in free verse of his own on the subject of the celebrated reply of the General Cambronne when an English officer called on him to surrender at Waterloo. Cambronne married a very proper Englishwoman whose curiosity to learn the famous exclamation (which she rightly suspected was not "The Old Guard dies but never surrenders") is finally satisfied. Grand humor, diction, and recording.

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